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supper play in her downfall. The case also teaches that, by the age of sixteen, home influences have accomplished their work of forming tendencies in a child's life for right or wrong. In the light of such facts, infancy seems too late to begin a child's training; let us encourage parents, by self-discipline, to give their children the benefit of prenatal influences for good.

If "high thinking and right living" are habits from the very cradle, great physical temptations, however alluringly presented, will be resisted and this Black Plague will receive its death-blow.

"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?"

"Self reverence, self knowledge, self control. These three alone lead life to sovereign power."

IS THE PRESENT SYSTEM OF TRAINING FAIR TO THE PUPIL NURSE?*

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My address this afternoon is not intended as an unfriendly criticism of the present system of training nurses. It is far from my wish to invite more or less angry retort, nor do I desire to provoke intemperate rejoinder or the retort with which our childhood days were familiar: "You're another!" It is rather the purpose of this paper to invite discussion of a subject which needs discussion, not with heat, but calmly and dispassionately, with the desire to get at nothing save the truth. Nothing is ever gained on either side, if there *are* sides to this question of the trained nurse, by recrimination, nor will heated editorials, with much calling of hard names, serve to elucidate matters. To use a somewhat overworked phrase, what we need is light, not heat. Moreover, coöperation is necessary between nurses and doctors. We cannot do our best work, or even very good work, certainly in public institutions, without your aid, and I do not suppose

*Read at the informal meeting of the New York State Nurses' Association in Brooklyn, November, 1906.

that you will question the assertion that you need the support of the doctors.

The present system of training has been the slow growth of years. For the most part, it works well and has furnished society and the medical profession with a body of highly-trained women whose work both in public and private has been beyond serious criticism. It was, therefore, with some surprise that the writer read in the pages of one of your special journals that the system was a failure, and that the doctors were the cause thereof, since the medical profession has been running the training-schools all these years. This was an entirely novel proposition, for the writer is connected with six hospitals, either as attending or consulting surgeon, and was entirely unaware that his colleagues were engaged in any such occupation. Training-school committees, to be sure, there are, but their function has been largely ornamental, or at most advisory, the advice given being accepted or not accepted at the will of the superintendent of nurses.

With this fact I have no complaint. The function of the superintendent of nurses is to govern her school, and in my experience she has rarely been interfered with. Indeed, I know of no instance of interference. The results have been admirable, yet as a result partly of economic conditions peculiar to hospitals, partly from what I believe to be mistaken ideas of instruction, much injustice is at present meted out to the pupil nurse, and if certain so-called reforms are carried out as set forth in a recent proposed scheme of education by your state board, a much greater injustice will be worked upon both the pupil nurse and the public. Let us take up for discussion first, then, certain practices of hospitals toward the probationer and the young pupil nurse.

In the training-school prospectus of many hospitals there is a clause which permits the discharge of the probationer at any time during the time of her probation without the assigning of any reason therefor. This probationary period is often six months, never less than three. A number of nurses, two of them in official positions, have recently stated to the writer that it is the practice of some large hospitals during the spring and fall cleaning to enroll a much larger number of probationers than they can possibly require for the severest selective purposes, put them at work, and then get rid of the supernumeraries under this very convenient clause. I ask you to kindly remember that this charge is not made by the medical profession, but by some of your own association, who are or have been in position, presumably, to know the facts.

I prefer, however, to think that this is an extreme statement, although I have personally known of instances of great injustice due to the application of this rule. It has dangerous possibilities, and is altogether unfair to the probationer. It is un-American. Why should she be denied the reason for her discharge, unless the person discharging her is afraid to give the true reason? If you do not intend to apply the rule, why put it in the prospectus? It is certainly liable to dangerous abuse. You take the girl's time, you sometimes take her money, and then, without either compensation or explanation, cause her to lose both, since if she enters another hospital she must still serve a probationary term. Moreover, the hypocritical statement is made that the declination of a candidate is no reflection on her character, although every training-school superintendent within reach of my voice knows perfectly well that she would exercise extreme reserve in admitting as a probationer a young woman who had been rejected after probation in another hospital. If she was short of nurses, she might try her. I contend that the probationer is entitled to the reasons for her rejection. A very fair method is that of one superintendent known to me, who at the end of two months warns unsatisfactory pupils, but permits them then to exercise their own discretion as to continuing their probation. I also contend that a hospital has no more right to rob a girl of several weeks or months of her time, during which she has been worked hard at menial tasks, than it has to take her money. I admit the discretionary right of choice, but the present arbitrary and secret methods are outrageously unjust, and ought to be modified or restricted. One prospectus, treating on this subject, says rather significantly that candidates are expected to bring with them the means of returning to their homes if unsuccessful. After three or four months in a large city, I wonder how much of this return money would be available. I once knew of a case where a girl was literally turned in the street with just five dollars in her pocket, her home being Canada. And this was supposed to be an institution of mercy!

Much of the work required of the probationer is distinctly not nursing. She enters a hospital to be taught the intelligent care of the sick, but instead of this she is, in many hospitals, set to do the work of a chamber- or kitchen-maid. She dusts, she scrubs, she washes dishes; in short, she is set to do all sorts of menial tasks for which the hospital, lacking the probationers, would be compelled to hire the proper class of labor. That is exactly what they ought to do in the first place. But, you say, this is a period of trial and is meant as a test.

I doubt whether you would consider it necessary to put a medical student at work digging trenches or cleaning streets so as to find out whether he would make a good doctor. The lesson of neatness can be taught in the care of the sick and not by the use of the scrubbing-brush and the dish-cloth. Why waste the time of the nurse on such tasks, unless it is to save the wages of a domestic? You wrong your young pupil doubly, since you distinctly incapacitate her to receive the instruction which is her due, for a tired body means a tired brain and an inability to receive or retain knowledge.

Your present registration law requires a nurse to pass but two years in a hospital, whereupon she becomes eligible for examination for the title of R.N. I conclude, therefore, that it is the opinion of your board that a woman can be made a competent nurse in that length of time. If that is your opinion, then every additional year that you compel the pupil nurse to serve the hospital is in the nature of a tribute, a sort of hospital graft extorted by the power of combination. Most hospitals compel the pupil to serve a term of three years, and some require four years of servitude. I say servitude advisedly. During those three years of hospital work, were you not by day and by night, Sundays and holidays, the actual property of the hospital? Do you know of any apprenticeship, be it in trade or art, which can compare in severity and bondage with that of your apprenticeship? Much of this severe discipline is no doubt essential to the proper regulation of the work, yet some of you are proposing to make it more arduous and longer, although your own law tacitly admits that a two years' course is sufficient.

I am quite willing to confess that I was formerly in favor of the three years' course, though I deny that I have ever been of the opinion that it took four years to make a good nurse out of an intelligent woman. After a good deal of experience with nurses, and as a result of much observation, I am sure that I was in error when I favored the extension of the course to three years. I am now of the opinion of your board that two years is enough, so here is one doctor who is willing to confess to the error of his ways, and, what is more to the point, do what he can to further a return to the shorter term so wisely advocated by your board, as voiced by your law. If a young woman is not a competent nurse at the end of the two years' course, she will not be competent after three years, nor four years, nor twenty years, and hospitals which are extending the term of this industrial slavery are simply getting for nothing services worth at least sixty dollars a month. That is not charity nor religion. It is high finance. More-

over, the hospital takes good care to exact payment of tribute to the uttermost farthing. It will have, to the last grain, its pound of flesh. Should one of you fall ill of typhoid fever, contracted while nursing in the wards, you are allowed to graduate with your class, provided your illness is not too long, but afterward you must serve the hospital until you have paid up to the last moment for your absence from service. If this is not industrial slavery, I do not know what it is.

Present conditions are hard enough. I beg of you to consider before you make them harder. It has been said that the doctors are to blame for some of the existing evils, especially the overtraining. I have read over carefully the proposed curriculum for training-schools, and was forcibly reminded of the reply of one of the kings of Israel to a certain petition: "My little finger shall be thicker than my father's loins. For whereas my father put a heavy yoke upon you, I will put more to your yoke." I doubt whether the king's petitioners got much comfort from his answer. If, as members of a nurses' association, you are really interested in the future of the trained nurse, I ask you to read carefully the proposed curriculum as published in the May number of *THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING*, and then say, frankly, whether my quotation is not apt. This appears to be the nurses' solution of the problem, but I venture to hope that it is not the solution which your association will finally accept.

Do not, however, mistake the spirit in which I address you. I have nothing but admiration for the motive which prompts your state board in publishing this curriculum, and for the effort which you are making for the betterment of present conditions. It is possible, however, to raise your standard too high. It is possible to be unjust to your pupil nurse when you require her to study a lot of things which have as much relation to nursing as surveying and navigation have to medicine. The course is hard enough as it is, both mentally and physically, and it ought not to be overburdened with non-essentials. Permit me, therefore, to discuss this proposed curriculum in a fraternal spirit. May I remind you of the notice posted in a church in Texas? "The audience is requested not to shoot at the organist. He is doing his best."

There is an economic side to this question. There ought to be a reasonable proportion between the time taken to acquire marketable knowledge and the market value of that knowledge. Thus, a man or woman could fairly be expected to spend seven or eight years in preparation for a life-work if the average income afterward was to be fifteen hundred dollars or two thousand dollars. I

think I hear some of you say to yourselves: "Why, that is ridiculously inadequate for so long a course!" So it is, but is the income of the average nurse anything like that? There are careers in life, however, in which the actual income bears a very small proportion either to the value of the services or the time taken in preparation therefor. Thus the highest income which a man can expect in the army or navy is fifty-five hundred dollars and this only after years of service on a salary which will not average over three thousand dollars, and several examinations for promotion when in the medical service. After retirement, however, the officer draws a pension of two-thirds of his pay at the time of retirement. This is equivalent to an unsailable capital of fifty thousand dollars. Is there any such prospect open to the trained nurse? If she loses her health in the line of her duty, is there any one who stands ready to pension her for the rest of her days? You see, therefore, from the economic standpoint, that the time taken in your education ought to bear a reasonable proportion to your expectation of income and the permanency of your employment.

It will be useful here to inquire as to these matters. First as to income. I have taken some pains to get at the actual average income of the average nurse by inquiry of the nurses themselves, and I find to my utter astonishment that it is a little more than half of what I supposed. If any one had asked me to state a figure, I should have said between nine hundred and one thousand dollars, but the nurses say that it will not average over six hundred and fifty dollars, taking the good years with the bad, and the enforced absences due to personal illness and over-fatigue. Now, as to the permanency of employment, the estimate of the average duration of nursing life has been given me as low as seven years, and in no instance has the estimate been higher than ten years. I do not mean to say that there are not now in active service nurses who have been nursing for a longer period, but they are certainly the exception. The duties of the position are so severe that only a relatively young woman is equal to their fulfillment. In view of these facts, I respectfully ask you whether a woman ought to be required to surrender from five to eight years of her life in preparation for so brief and so poorly paid a career? But, you ask me, how do I get these figures? Look at the requirements of many of your training-schools. There are not a few which insist that the applicant must be a high-school graduate. That is a four years' course, which, added to a three years' or four years' course in the hospital, is seven or eight years respectively.

Your proposed course since January, 1906, compels a stay of one year in a secondary school. So, if you add this to the three years which most hospitals require, the shortest time of actual preparation is four years. Do you think the returns warrant the outlay? I am perfectly willing to admit the truth of all the fine things that are said about a nursing career, but, nevertheless, it is just that a young woman should weigh all these things before she enters the school. It has been my experience that very many nurses, perhaps the majority, have others depending upon them for support. You may say all the fine things you like about the nobility of your career and its self-sacrifice, but that won't help you to take care of your old mother, or give you the means to assist a young brother to get his education. In other words, if you are going to so increase the educational requirements that there is an absolute want of balance between them and the pecuniary results after graduation, two things will happen: young women will seek other ways of earning a living, and the so-called ten weeks' schools will flourish. The correspondence schools will increase, in number and audacity, and we doctors will get a great many more cards from agencies for "experienced nurses" than we now do, and the public will avail themselves of these under-trained and incompetent women, to your great detriment. There is no escape from this conclusion.

I regret that a due regard for your patience, and the length of time I have already detained you, forbids a full discussion of your proposed curriculum. It does not seem to me to be a course that can be covered in less than four years. Perhaps I underestimate the capacity of the pupil nurse, but let one example serve to illustrate what I mean. Take, for instance, the sixteen-day course for probationers. In this time the probationer is to be taught, besides all the practical work of the hospital, eighteen lessons in the theory and practice of nursing, eight lessons in elementary anatomy, and eight lessons in bandaging. The practical work includes the care of rubber goods, care of helpless or stretcher cases, taking temperatures and pulse, charting same, bedside notes, preparation of mustard pastes, stupes, poultices, care of toilets, bed-pans, catheters, douche nozzles, and instruments; enemata, purgative, nutrient, and stimulative. Space and time forbid me to name all that these probationers are to be taught in sixteen days. Of the eighteen lessons on the theory and practice of nursing I will mention only one or two: the metric system, signs and abbreviations, weights and measures, administration, value of the different methods, classification of drugs; a general knowledge

of the preparation, strength, dose, physiologic action, poisonous symptoms, and treatment of aconite, alcohol, arsenic—to cut the list short, of no less than fifteen poisons. It would take a diligent medical student at least two months to get even the most superficial acquaintance with the topics given in the eight lessons in anatomy outlined for this sixteen-day probationary term. Under the head of bandages, not less than a dozen are mentioned, which the pupil is to be taught in the same preliminary period of sixteen days. One is tempted to inquire whether, if pupils can be taught all these topics in sixteen days, there is any use in even a two years' course?

As one reads the remainder of the proposed curriculum, it appears as if a great deal of time and energy has been devoted to the acquirement of knowledge which has little real bearing on nursing the sick. If I were asked to state what the functions of the trained nurse are, I should answer, first, to care for the bodily needs of her patient; second, to carry out the orders of the physician; third, to record the vital phenomena of the patient. Everything that the nurse does must come under one of these heads. Yet in the proposed schedule of instruction we find such matters as the following: "Lesson 2, mineral food, mineral waters, salts, amount found in the body; necessity in food; food value in heat, energy, tissue building. Kinds: calcium, sodium, phosphorus, magnesium, iron, sulphur, potassium, uses in body," etc. Under the head of practical work, the pupil is given a little excursion into blow-pipe analysis, and is required to apply the flame test for sodium, potassium, calcium and strontium by borax bead and Bunsen burner. In another lesson the pupil is given instruction on sugar: comparison of sucrose, glucose, levulose, lactose, with source, preparation, composition, properties, digestion. From these lofty heights, the pupil descends in the practical work "to make cranberry jelly, to bake an apple, and to make peanut brittle." Evidently the nurse who survives this course will be a chemist, a physiologist, a cook, and a confectioner. Any one who cares to peruse the pages of this remarkable course will find paragraph after paragraph of instruction concerning abstruse chemical and physiological subjects which have absolutely nothing to do with nursing the sick. I do not believe that four years would be too long to really complete this course, and at the end of that time we should have a nurse with a lot of knowledge of not the slightest use to her or to her patient, at least two years of whose time would have been wasted in the acquirement of a lot of theory without bearing on her work. Why should the nurse be taught urinalysis or the use of the microscope, as set forth in one

prospectus, or the manufacture of the various culture media used in a bacteriological laboratory? A nurse has responsibility enough without burdening her with responsibilities which are distinctly those of the doctor. All these things simply increase the labor of the pupil in the hospital, take her time and her energy, and are perfectly worthless in the end. If there is in life any harder task than that of the pupil nurse, I should like to know what it is. She is on her feet ten to twelve hours a day for eleven and a half months in the year. She has few holidays, little relaxation, and an enormous lot of hard and often repulsive work. She rises by rule, she eats her meals—mostly bad—by rule, she is a hospital machine. How any body of fairly merciful women can have it in their hearts to increase her labor by loading her down with all sorts of useless theory which she will promptly forget, is beyond the ken of man. I trust that as an association you will consider this matter carefully. I do not believe that this scheme will ever be put into effect, since it is so obviously unfair and out of proportion.

The hospital is far more indebted to the pupil nurse than the nurse is to the hospital. Superintendents are too apt to speak in a somewhat grandiloquent manner of the enormous expense the training of the nurse is to the hospital. One thing is certain: the expense is n't in the food. I should like to know what the hospital would do to-day without the pupil nurse. We are absolutely dependent on them for the proper care of the sick in our wards. A more hard-worked, uncomplaining, and useful band of women I defy you to find anywhere. Do not say to them as you are to take these matters into your own hands: "For whereas my father chastised you with whips, I will chastise you with scorpions." I have faith to believe that when you finally put into effect a new course of study for pupil nurses, it will be on the lines of the recent examination papers of your State Board of Examiners. It is with great pleasure that I read over the list of questions. Anything fairer, more judicious, or better qualified to test the real knowledge of a nurse and her capacity to do honor to her guild and faithful work to the public, it has never been my lot to see. As long as your course is conducted on the lines of those examination papers, the pupil nurse will have cause to thank you, as will the public and the doctors.

A WITTY Western woman said, recently: "Apropos of automobiles, the world is still divided into the quick and the dead."